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Broadcasters Letter

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Letter No. 2712

May 5, 1995

MORE WHEAT FOR CHINA? -- U.S. Department of Agriculture has opened the door for China to purchase more wheat from the United States. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced a 1 million metric ton reallocation of wheat within the Export Enhancement Program (EEP). This reallocation means a reduction for four program areas: the Former Soviet Union, Pakistan, Jordan and Sub-Saharan Africa. Associate Administrator for the Foreign Agricultural Service, Tim Galvin says this will probably mean an increase of 1 million tons of wheat being sold since allotments were taken from countries who weren't likely to purchase their full wheat allotment. Allocations will be valid until June 30, 1995. **Contact:** Glenn Kaup (202) 720-3329.

DAIRY FARMERS WHO PRODUCED LESS, GET MORE -- Dairy farmers who cut back or didn't increase milk production last year can check their mail for a refund check. Refunds of dairy assessments totaling \$72.8 million dollars were sent out to farmers who either reduced or did not increase their 1994 milk marketings from their 1993 level. All milk marketed during 1994 was assessed a milk marketing assessment ranging from 10.12 cents in February, March and April, to 19.28 cents from May through December. To compensate for the 1994 marketing year refunds, the current assessment of 11.25 cents per hundredweight will be raised almost seven cents to 18.25 cents. That rate will remain in effect for the rest of 1995. **Contact:** Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

USDA REACTS TO ETHANOL RULING -- "I am disappointed," said Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman in response to a Court of Appeals ruling striking down a requirement for ethanol to be included in reformulated gasoline. The Environmental Protection Agency's Renewable Oxygenate Requirement for Reformulated Gasoline was struck down April 28, 1995. Secretary Glickman said the agency thought they had the authority to issue the regulation and that it would increase economic activity in rural America while promoting clean air. Glickman said, "The Administration will keep fighting for ethanol and will continue to ensure ethanol has a role in the nation's energy future. At a time when we are importing over half of our oil, we need a growing domestic renewable energy industry more than ever." **Contact:** Jim Petterson (202) 720-4623.

COUNTY LOAN RATES ANNOUNCED -- Wheat, barley, oats and rye county loan and purchase rates were set for the 1995 crops. U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the rates, based on changes in the national average price support rates. Some county rates were adjusted because of location and transportation costs, but were limited to a three percent change in addition to the national average price support rate from the 1994 crop. To find out specific county loan rates, contact local Consolidated Farm Service Agency offices. For a complete copy of the rate schedule, write USDA/CFSA, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013-2415. **Contact:** Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.

IT'S THE PITS FOR CANNED PEACHES -- For the last eight years, exporters of U.S. canned peaches have lost both share and volume in Canadian, Japanese and Mexican markets in spite of imports that doubled in those countries. USDA analysts say increased shipments of heavily subsidized Greek produce since 1991 is the primary reason for the displacement. In 1994, U.S. exports to those countries dropped to about half the levels of just five years ago. As for 1995 prospects, analysts are looking at a mixed outlook, due to Mexico's financial problems and Greece's enormous export supplies. **Contact: Ross G. Kreamer (202) 720-9903.**

ONIONS AREN'T BAD FOR SHEEP -- As long as they're in a balanced diet, onions can be fed safely to sheep and still provide as much weight gain as high-quality sorghum does. That's what animal scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service found out when they fed sheep either onions or a mixture of onions, alfalfa and sorghum. Weight gains for those getting the onions were comparable to those for sheep that were fed mixtures of sorghum and alfalfa. In an industry where whole fields of products could go unused because of high output and low profits, this provides an avenue for onion producers to unload excess produce. Growers face the problem of getting rid of excess onions since some landfill operators won't accept them. If they are simply left in the field, onions can cause diseases that affect the next crop. Scientists caution that sheep being fed onions have to get a high-quality protein from either alfalfa or other feeds in order to gain weight and avoid illness. **Contact: Rick Estell or Ed Frederickson (505)646-5889.**

BLIGHT CUTS YIELDS FOR CHICKPEA GROWERS -- The worst chickpea disease can wipe out entire crops, reduce yields and affect seed quality. The blight known as Ascochyta can drop yields of 2,200 pounds of chickpeas per acre to less than 400, as was the case for an Idaho farmer in 1985. USDA plant pathologists are fighting back by introducing three Agricultural Research Service chickpea varieties that resist the fungus. Two of the new varieties are similar to the type most often seen in salad bars, the creamy-white kabuli chickpeas Dwelley and Sanford. The third type is Myles, a small, dark type used to make popular Indian, Pakistani and Ethiopian dishes. All three varieties made it through rigorous testing and production trials and are now available for production. Acreage devoted to chickpea production dropped from 11,000 in 1987 to 4,000 in 1994 but is expected to rise in light of the new varieties. **Contact: Walter J. Kaiser (509) 335-6654 or Frederick Muehlbauer (509) 335-9521.**

CATTLE TICK DIPPING BECOMES MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY -- Before cattle can cross the border from Mexico into the United States, they have to take a dip in a tick-killing solution. A million Mexican cattle a year cross the border by first being submerged and then swimming through a 5,000 gallon mixture of coumaphos and water. Neither the vats nor the cattle are the problem, but what goes in them and on them is. The used pesticide dip needs to be replaced at least every two years which presents a challenge to USDA microbiologists. But now, by adding iron and magnesium salts, scientists are able to break down the insecticide into carbon dioxide and water. This works either directly on the dip or on land that is contaminated by dip disposal permitting more environmentally friendly disposal. Since 1935, USDA tick eradication officials have been supervising the operation of vats on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. Ticks are a prevalent Mexican cattle problem and can cause cattle fever. This prospect once nearly destroyed the entire southern cattle industry because northern farmers didn't want to run the risk of buying infected cattle. **Contact: Jeffrey S. Karns or Walter W. Mulbry (301) 504-6582.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1979 -- A new hit series playing in rural health care facilities is something called Telemedicine. Lori Spiczka reports on this new method of bringing health care to rural areas by using telecommunications. (Weekly 5:00 documentary feature).

CONSUMER TIME #1458 -- Kids are nature's little environmentalists. Taking care of septic tanks. The battered bat. New uses for wood. It's the season for ticks. (Weekly consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1970 -- Looking at what concerns those in the hog sector. Environmental rules and the farmer reaction. USDA is looking for a producer of a filler and bulking agent known as "alternan." More wheat sales to China? Big crunch for crop insurance. (Weekly agriculture features).

UPCOMING ON USDA'S RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, May 15, cattle and sheep outlook. Tuesday, May 16, farm labor; milk production and income; poultry outlook; weekly weather and crops. Friday, May 19, agricultural outlook; cattle on feed; livestock slaughter. Monday, May 22, agricultural trade update. Tuesday, May 23, NAFTA report; livestock, dairy and poultry; weekly weather and crops; catfish processing. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or (202) 720-8359
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545
Material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.**

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Eric Parsons reports on cotton supply and demand, as USDA estimates indicate record highs in several categories; Brenda Curtis reports on a Native American Heritage garden on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

ACTUALITIES -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman and U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor talk to farm broadcasters in Washington, D.C. Topics include USDA budget cuts, farm programs and rural economic development and U.S.-Canadian wheat trade dispute.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

Thursday, 3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 302, C-band, Channel 6 (Transponder 3H), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3820 MHz. Monday, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET, Galaxy 4, Channel 12 (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3940 MHz.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry A. Quinn at (202)720-6072 or 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 202050-1300.

OFF MIKE

RIBBON-CUTTING...to officially open our new Radio Center was done by Secretary of Agriculture **Dan Glickman** on Monday morning, May 1. **Joe Cornely** (WRFD, Columbus, OH), president of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB), joined me in the ceremony with the Secretary and our radio team (**Gary Crawford, Lori Spiczka and Brenda Curtis**). Fifty farm broadcasters here to attend their annual Washington Ag Watch Conference witnessed this historic event. Secretary Glickman told the audience that he'd already used the radio center before he cut the ribbon. It was a special honor for us to have two of our key clients -- the Agriculture Secretary and farm broadcasters -- with us to dedicate our new facilities.

USDA radio services date back to the late 1920's when the first Farm and Home Hour began. Come see us in our new facilities during your next visit to Washington.

USDA HOSTS BROADCASTERS...for a half-day, informational program May 1 before those attending went to the White House for briefings by Agriculture Secretary **Dan Glickman**, U.S. Trade Ambassador **Mickey Kantor**, Deputy Domestic Policy Advisor **William Galston** and White House Press Secretary **Mike McCurry**.

FARM NEWSREEL...was a 15-minute filmed TV show that began nearly 40 years ago in the fall of 1958 by Hearst Metrotone News. **Martin Andrews**, editor and writer for the series, writes to say that it appeared on 65 TV stations from coast to coast for 26 weeks. It featured stories from the U.S. and abroad, and each issue ended with a popular 3-5 minute section called "Farmer of the Week." These were outstanding farmers or ranchers, always from a different state, selected by a local TV farm director or by a USDA Extension agent. Martin says "Farm Newsreel" was one of the earliest nationally televised farm shows in America.

NATIVE OKLAHOMAN RETURNS...to become the new farm director of KECO Radio in Elk City, OK. **Lee McCoy**, formerly with Texas State Network in Arlington, TX, says he is on-the-air from 6:30-7 a.m. and 12:30-1 p.m. with agricultural news and features. Lee's phone number is (405) 225-9696.

Larry A. Quinn
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